

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that the House leadership has agreed to bring to the floor this week the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006. I want to thank the Speaker and the majority leader for their willingness to go forward with this debate prior to our upcoming recess.

Madam Speaker, the 1965 Voting Rights Act changed America. It created the opportunity for minority citizens to fully participate in democracy. Prior to the enactment and enforcement of the act, black citizens in the South were disenfranchised, primarily because of the literacy tests and because of the design of election systems that submerged concentrations of black voters into large, majority-white election districts. The result was that African-American communities could not elect candidates of their choice to office.

Why? It was because black voters did not comprise sufficient numbers within the district and white voters refused to vote for candidates who were the choice of the minority community. And so the votes of black citizens were diluted, which is a clear violation of the principle of one-person, one-vote.

The Voting Rights Act permits minority citizens to bring Federal lawsuits when they feel their vote is being diluted. Hundreds of these lawsuits have been successfully litigated in the Federal courts. In my prior life, I was a voting rights attorney in North Carolina. As a result of court ordered remedies, local jurisdictions have been required to create election districts that do not dilute minority voting strength. When I was in law school 32 years ago, there were virtually no black elected officials in my congressional district. Today, I count 302.

The Voting Rights Act also requires some jurisdictions to obtain Department of Justice pre-clearance to any change in election procedure. This, at first blush, may appear to be unfair to those jurisdictions, but the jurisdictions that are covered have a significant history of vote dilution and this requirement of pre-clearance simply assures that the jurisdiction does not intentionally or unintentionally make changes in their election procedures that will discriminate. This is called section 5. Section 5 has prevented many, many election changes that would have disenfranchised minority voters. It serves a useful purpose and should be extended.

A short story, Madam Speaker, and then I will close. In 1953 in my hometown of Wilson, NC, the African-American community worked very hard to teach the literacy test and qualify black citizens to vote. They then organized and elected an African American to the city council in a district with a large concentration of black voters. That was big news. When it was time

for reelection in 1957, the city council, arbitrarily and without notice or debate, changed the election system from district voting to at-large voting which resulted in the submerging of black voters. The change also required voters to vote for all city council seats on the ballot. If not, the ballot was considered spoiled. It was called the "vote for six rule."

Needless to say, that candidate, Dr. G.K. Butterfield, was handily defeated. If section 5 had been in place in 1957, this jurisdiction would not have been able to implement the changes and this community would have continued to have representation.

Madam Speaker, we have made tremendous progress in this country with respect to civil rights and voting rights. We must not turn back. I urge my colleagues on Thursday to vote for another 25-year extension of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and require covered jurisdictions to get the Department of Justice to analyze the voting change to determine if it will have the effect of diluting minority voting strength.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend J. Cletus Kiley, President, The Faith & Politics Institute, Washington D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God, we bow our heads humbly, gathered in this hallowed Chamber at the beginning of a new day. Here, in this place, our faith and our politics meet. Our work is about the just ordering of our society. And so at the beginning of this day we beg a portion of Your spirit that we might fully understand the authentic requirements that such a just society demands.

We beg a fuller portion of Your spirit to strengthen us so that our work is always at the service of love, and thus, in the face of human suffering, we may become a consolation; where there is isolation, we may become community; where there is need, we may become abundance; where there is threat, we may become strength.

Today, O God, stretch us beyond our personal limits that we might fulfill Your divine plan and may serve the common good of our people. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KUCINICH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

DEMOCRATS HAVE A LACKLUSTER RECORD ON BORDER SECURITY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats have been talking a lot about their agenda lately, but each and every time they fail to mention border security or immigration reform, and I suppose for good reason. With their lackluster record on immigration reform, I can understand why they hesitate to bring up the issue.

After all, Republicans voted to pass a border security bill in December, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill. Republicans voted to pass the REAL ID Act to make sure people who receive driver's licenses are here legally, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill.

Republicans wanted to allow members of our Armed Forces to help perform certain border security protection functions, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the amendment.

With a record like this, it is no wonder that the Democrats never mention border security as a part of their agenda.

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago today, on July 11, I introduced legislation to create a Cabinet-level Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which would employ the principles taught by Christ, Gandhi, Dr. King, Mother Teresa and others to create a new hope for violence-free homes, schools and communities through peace and character education, a new hope that through peace education we can even challenge the notion of the inevitability of war.

Today, thanks to hundreds of community groups, led by The Peace Alliance, momentum is building. Fifteen